

Carolyn Toews

New ACBL Club Master



In Casper, Wyoming duplicate bridge is making a comeback thanks to a committed and patient bridge instructor, Susan Driggers. Three years ago Carolyn noticed in the community section of the paper that free bridge lessons were going to be offered on Thursday nights. Her parents had played bridge and they introduced her to bridge but she hadn't played since high school, and certainly not duplicate bridge. Carolyn decided to check out the lessons. There was a large turnout that night, around 5 tables and Susan started at the very beginning, 4 suits, rank of suits, points, etc. The enthusiasm dropped slightly over time but there remained a core group and usually 2-4 tables on Thursday nights. Her husband became intrigued at the bridge books laying around the house

and also started attending classes. Susan introduced bidding boxes, ACBL, masterpoints, and as they progressed encouraged them to attend the regular Wednesday and Friday duplicate games with the 'big guys'.

Some of them started going and playing with the experts, many (most) who were Life Masters. They were very welcoming and patient. Their inexperience perplexed some. Carolyn remembers one person told her that he was sure she didn't have the ace because no one leads from an ace (who knew)!! Playing with these patient experienced players reinforced the lessons Susan was teaching. Susan also matched mentors with the new students. This made the Wednesday and Friday regular duplicate games even less threatening. (Thank you to my mentor Kris Hornberger). Now it is not uncommon to have 4 or 6 'newbies' at the regular duplicate games.

Several months ago, her partner (Diann Fondren, another new bridge player) and Carolyn came in first on a Wednesday game. When the director announced the results the entire club started clapping and congratulating us. They were still congratulating them the next week! Thanks to Susan and the encouragement of the Oil City Duplicate Bridge group Carolyn recently became a club master as have 5 other class mates.

Susan is still teaching classes on Thursday nights and new students join up every Fall. She will also be teaching an OLLI beginning bridge class this Fall.